

# CFMEU SAFETY GUIDANCE

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Procedure for the Handling Cutting & Storage of MDF (Medium Density Fibre Board)

All Sub-contractors on site that are using MDF **must** Familiarise and include this procedure within their Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) and JHA / JSA prior to any work commencing on site.

#### 1. DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL

Particleboard or fibre board such as chipboard and MDF are manufactured from particles or fibres and are usually bonded with **urea / formaldehyde** resin. The manufactured board is largely made from softwood, but may be veneered with variety of finishes including hardwood. These boards are widely used in manufacture of office, shop & apartment fittings & furniture.

#### 2. HAZARDS.

The hazard arising from handling & working with particleboard or fibreboard that are bonded with **urea / formaldehyde** resin include exposures to wood dusts & potential formaldehyde vapour.

#### 3. ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS.

##### a. Wood Dusts

- Irritation of lungs – reduced lung capacity
- Skin allergies – dermatitis
- Eye irritation
- Asthma
- Increased risk of cancer; nasal, larynx, lung

##### b. Formaldehyde

- Irritation to the nose, throat, eyes & skin
- Respiratory illness
- Asthma
- Cancer



#### 4. OHS SAFE WORKING PROCEDURES

##### 4.1 TRAINING

All employees involved in the handling & cutting of MDF material should receive special induction that includes education on the respective health hazards and training in the safe work method procedures.

REPORT UNSAFE WORK PRACTICES - CALL (08) 9228 6900 OR EMAIL [SAFETY@CFMEUWA.COM](mailto:SAFETY@CFMEUWA.COM)

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### 4.2 PROCUREMENT

Subcontractors should note that only the Australian made MDF product should be purchased which is clearly labelled Australian made LFE = low formaldehyde emission. Furthermore, all products on site must be accompanied by a MSDS.

### 4.3 STORAGE

MDF should be stored in shaded areas to inhibit any release of formaldehyde vapour. The plastic packaging on the bundles of MDF should be retained whilst in storage.

### 4.4 CUTTING

#### a. Designated Cutting room

All cutting of MDF products should be undertaken in a designated cutting room. This facility should take the form of purpose built enclosure, or an existing room with lockable door.

#### b. Cutting room set-up

- The cutting room must have ventilation.
- Doors must be closed at all times.
- A dust collection bag should be installed on the power-cutting tool.
- Regular daily clean up with approved industrial vacuum cleaner (in addition to the dust collection bag on the power tool) will be sufficient.
- On no account should the dust be vented out into the outside atmosphere.
- All dust collection should be double bagged and sealed prior to disposal in site rubbish bins.

### 4.5 SIGNAGE

**For designated cutting room = MDF CUTTING NO UNAUTHORISED ENTRY**

For notice boards = NO ENTRY TO MDF CUTTING ROOM UNLESS AUTHORISED

#### a. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Hygiene

All employees involved in the cutting of MDF must at all times use the following PPE

- P2 respirator
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Disposal coveralls

Prior to crib breaks employees must thoroughly wash face, hands & arms.

#### b. Additional Procedure

Sub-contractors are to pre-cut off – site so as to minimize cutting on – site.

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